

The reason, I guess, is because there are no votes to be garnered by the Puerto Rican population in New York for not bombing those States. Think of the precedent we now set by compromising with officials from Puerto Rico. Closing Vieques could set off a host of issues in other countries as well as our own States where we currently conduct training. The net result is having a military that can put rounds on target in theory only. Without practical application, we put our forces in harm's way without even sending them to hostile areas. I do not think we should stand by and jeopardize our servicemen for someone else's political gain.

There is no compromise when it comes to reopening Vieques. Opening the range as proposed for inert ordnance is not practical. More can be gained by conducting separate, compartmentalized exercises on ranges that accept live ordnance. Training with dud ordnance excludes artillery, mortars and direct fire weapons system as these systems either do not have inert ammunition available or insufficient quantities are on hand to conduct training. Limiting the range to inert ordnance denies the naval services from achieving essential live fire training and eliminates essential "arms" from the combined arms network that makes the Navy and Marine Corps so successful on the battlefield. Using live ordnance is the only way to simulate actual combat conditions. It instills confidence in our Marines and sailors on their procedures and equipment and validates every aspect of weapon employment. Without live fire training, the Navy-Marine team would deploy without having tested its ability to integrate, organize, execute and sustain high tempo combat operations with all weapons systems and live fire ordnance.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot look myself in the mirror knowing that we have sent our troops out to do a job that we have not prepared them for when the tools to prepare them are in place and ready for use. Is it not unusual that the decision to end the live fire bombing rides on the coattails of the President's decision to grant clemency to convicted Puerto Rican terrorists? We can mask the reasons for the decision by saying that the bombing was stopped to prevent further casualties, but the real purpose seems to be political. Mr. Rodriguez was killed in a live fire accident several months ago in Vieques. However, his death is not justification to threaten several thousand of our military members by closing the range. If we stopped training every time we had a training casualty, we would never train.

I implore my fellow Members of Congress to look at this situation carefully and apply some common sense. The encroachment of military training areas is alarmingly on the rise and this is another example. We must provide our military with the best possible facilities so they can be ready to respond to

any contingency. This is proven in the recent events in Bosnia and East Timor where we called upon our service members and thrust them into hostile environments with the assumption that they were prepared and trained. Without Vieques, our naval forces are dealt a severe blow. With that, I make it a point to ensure that the island of Vieques is reopened indefinitely for live fire training with the intent that we provide our young men and women like those currently deployed with the USS Bataan Amphibious Ready Group and the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit with the best possible training before sending them into harm's way.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. MCINNIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCINNIS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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INTRODUCTION OF MILITARY FAMILY FOOD STAMP TAX CREDIT BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I want to read part of a transcript from the June 25 edition of "20/20" which featured a story on our military families who cannot make ends meet. I quote from the transcript.

"We begin with a shameful story about the men and women we count on to protect us, members of the United States armed services. They are prepared to die for us, but did you know that some of them must stand in food lines to help feed their families?"

Again, I quote from the transcript:

"It is a shocking sight to see proud American soldiers accepting charity and Federal aid just to get by."

The show also featured a 26-year-old computer operations specialist who has served 6 years in the Navy, Mr. Speaker, but makes only \$18,000 a year to care for his wife and three children. He said, and I quote, "I've talked to managers at fast food restaurants who make more money than I do. And I'm prepared to die for my country if necessary. And sometimes that seems really unfair."

A reported 600,000 enlisted troops, almost half the entire military base, make a base salary of \$18,000 or less. On May 21 of last year, "CBS This Morning" did a profile during its "Eye on America" on the state of our military families. The reporter interviewed a church volunteer and former military wife by the name of Pat Kallenbarger who works to help our military families in need.

She said, and I quote, "It's not unusual for me to find a family sleeping on the floor for lack of beds and eating on the floor because they don't have a

table and chairs, and they don't have the money to either buy them or rent them."

I further quote:

"I find babies in cardboard cartons. They'd be in a dresser drawer, except the family doesn't own a dresser."

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Mr. Speaker, this is shameful. These are our military families. In fact, I introduced a bill, H.R. 1055, a year ago, that would help give these men and women on food stamps a \$500 tax credit. I am urging our leadership, both Republican and Democrat, this year to please make sure before we end this session in October that we have spoken to this issue of our men and women on food stamps.

Mr. Speaker, I have before me a Marine. This Marine is holding in his arms his baby daughter named Bridgett, and the young lady standing on his feet is his 3-year-old daughter named Megan.

Mr. Speaker, this Marine is getting ready to deploy for Bosnia. The sad part of all of this, this Marine represents all of our men and women in uniform and represents those 600,000 that are making under \$18,000.

We must remember that these men and women that are willing to die for this country, 60 percent of them have families. I think about this little girl, Megan, because you can see in her eyes a concern, and maybe that concern even at that young age is the fact that her daddy might leave and never come back. I do not know. But I do know this, Mr. Speaker, as a Member of this Congress, that those of us on both sides of the political aisle, we have an obligation, and in fact I think it is deplorable and unacceptable that we have not begun to help those men and women in uniform on food stamps.

So I urge my colleagues, we have about 80 Members of this House, both Republican and Democrat, on this bill, and I encourage my colleagues to please join me in this effort to make sure that this year, before we leave, that we do something tangible to help those men and women on food stamps.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PASCRELL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FOLEY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)